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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DR. G. B. M. ZERR.

By B. F. FINKEL, Ph. D., Springfield, Mo.

It is only fitting that the MONTHLY, to whose pages he was a constant and valued contributor, should give a brief account of the life of Dr. G. B. M. Zerr, whose unexpected death occurred October 7th, 1910.

His numerous contributions in the way of solutions of problems, as well as articles, attracted the attention of most of the readers of the MONTHLY from the first, and they entertained a very high opinion of his ability as was attested by the numerous inquiries we received from various readers concerning him. One of his unknown admirers once asked us what kind of food he lived on, that enabled him to solve so many difficult problems.

Professor Zerr was among the very first contributors to the MONTHLY seventeen years ago, and he was a constant and prolific contributor from that time until his death. There have been very few problems proposed in the MONTHLY that have passed him by unsolved, and when one considers the great number of problems he solved, not only in the MONTHLY but in a number of other journals to which he contributed, it is remarkable how few of them were incorrect. We think we are correct in saying that Dr. Zerr solved more difficult problems in the various branches of mathematics than any other man in the United States. He was particularly fond of solving problems in Average and Probability.

George B. McClellan Zerr was born in Union Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania, on July 25th, 1862. His mother died when he was eighteen months old and his father when he was ten years of age. He lived on a farm until his eighteenth year. He attended country school during the winter months each year, and at night he would recite lessons in Latin and other branches to Professor, afterwards Rev. S. A. Hiner. He worked through Greenleaf's National Arithmetic while at work on the farm. At the age of eighteen years he passed a county examination, and during the winter of 1880 he taught his first school in the country. In the spring of 1881, he entered the Keystone State Normal School and remained there until the closing session of 1882. In September, 1882, he entered Lafayette College, Easton, Pa.,



GEORGE B. MCCLELLAN ZERR

and graduated with the degree of A. B. June, 1886. In 1889, he received from his alma mater the degree of A. M. On June 6, 1895, he received the degree of Ph. D., by diploma, from New Windsor College, Maryland. While in college he was considered a good athlete as well as an excellent student.

After leaving college, he engaged in teaching Science and Mathematics in Staunton Military Academy, Staunton, Virginia. He remained at Staunton until June, 1888, at which time he removed to La Porte, Indiana, where he taught in the high school, remaining one year. He then returned to Staunton, teaching for three years in the Academy and three years in the High School, the last two years of which he was Principal. In June, 1895, he was elected Vice-President and Professor of Mathematics and Science in Texarkana College, Texarkana, Texas. He remained here two years. In 1897, he was elected President of Russell College, Lebanon, Virginia; in 1898 he was elected Principal of the East Chester High School; and in 1900 he was elected to the chair of Chemistry and Physics in Temple College, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, whose President is the noted Russell Conwell. He remained at Temple College until June, 1903, when the business world offered him larger returns for his service, and we next find him acting in the capacity of Chemical Engineer for a pulp manufacturing company at Parsons, West Virginia. He remained in the employ of this company until June, 1907, when he was appointed Professor of Mathematics in the Central Manual Training School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which position he held at the time of his death.

He was a constant contributor to the *Mathematical Messenger*, *The Mathematical Magazine*, *The Mathematical Visitor*, *School Science and Mathematics*, *The Ohio Teacher*, *The School Visitor*, and occasionally to the *Annals of Mathematics*, and *Educational Times and Reprints*, London, England. He also contributed numerous articles to engineering and mining journals.

In addition to the vast amount of labor expended in contributing problems, solutions, and articles to Mathematical and Scientific journals, he also wrote a Laboratory Manual of Chemistry.

In 1885, Professor Zerr married Miss Lillie Altenderfer, who with the three children, Enfield, Rosemond, and Arthur Cayley, mourn the loss of a good husband and a kind father.

He was a faithful member of the Episcopal church, of the Brotherhood of St. Andrews, of the Ancient Order of United Workmen, and an active worker in the Young Men's Christian Association.

While in Philadelphia we had the pleasure of making the personal acquaintance of Dr. Zerr and his family, and his frequent visits to our home will remain in our memory as among the pleasantest experiences of our two years sojourn in that city.